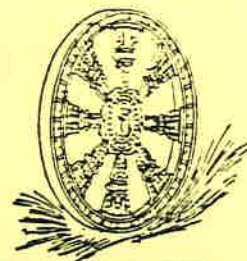


Vipassanā-Sāra



JAARGANG 3

Nummer 4

Mei 1988

Vipassanā-sāra

betekent in het Nederlands "Inzichts-bode". De Vipassanā-sāra is een uitgave van de Stichting Jonge Boeddhisten Nederland (S.J.B.N.) en komt tot stand in nauwe samenwerking met de Stichting Buddhavihara. Doel is mensen die Vipassanā beoefenen van juiste en nuttige informatie te voorzien, daarnaast te berichten over de activiteiten in ruimere zin van het Boeddhisties Meditatie Centrum te Amsterdam (Buddhavihara). In artikelen richten we ons met name op de lezingen en leringen van de Most Venerable Mettaviharee, de abt van Buddhavihara en Vipassanā-meditatieleraar.

De Vipassanā-sāra is bedoeld voor mensen die geïnteresseerd zijn in Vipassanā meditatie of in de verdere activiteiten van Buddhavihara, zoals o.a. de viering van boeddhistiese ceremonies en verschillende cursussen (Thaise les, Abhidhamma).

De abonnementsprijs is fl 10,- per jaar. U kunt zich als abonnee opgeven door bovengenoemd bedrag te storten op bank- of gironummer van de S.J.B.N. onder vermelding van "Vip.sara".

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Buddhavihara

Het beheer van het boeddhistiese meditatiecentrum Buddhavihara is in handen van de Stichting Buddhavihara. Mensen die het centrum en de activiteiten aldaar financieel willen ondersteunen, kunnen een bijdrage storten op:

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To our English readers:

Vipassanā sāra is in English 'Insight-magazine'. Our aim is to provide those interested in Vipassanā meditation with relevant and useful information, secondly to report on the activities of the Buddhist Meditation Centre in Amsterdam, Buddhavihara. In articles we base ourselves mainly on lectures and talks of the Most Venerable Mettaviharee, the Abbot of Buddhavihara and Vipassanā meditation-teacher.

The management of the Buddhist Meditation Centre Buddhavihara is in hands of the Foundation Buddhavihara. Those who wish to support the centre and the activities there financially, may send their contribution to:

Postbank acc.nr. 22.37.503

mentioning 'Buddhavihara',
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or:

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mentioning 'Buddhavihara'.

address bank:

Dam 2, Amsterdam.

vesak

On Sunday May 29 there will be the celebration of the Vesak-ceremony in Buddhavihara. Vesak or Visākha-pūjā is traditionally celebrated on the full-moon-day of the lunar month Visakha (May/June), to commemorate three important events in the life of the Buddha, i.e. his Birth, Enlightenment and Parinibbāna or Passing away. This is why Vesak is considered to be the major buddhist ceremony and as such it is an excellent occasion for people to take refuge in the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha.

As in former years some students of Venerable Phra Khru Kraisaravilasa (Mettaviharee) will take this triple refuge, take the five training-precepts (pañca-sīlāni) and thus become followers of the Buddha (upāsakas and upāsikās). On this occasion they will get their buddhist names in the Pāli-language.

A few other students will start on Friday and observe uposatha, i.e. they will take eight training-precepts and spend their time in meditation and the study of the Teaching of Lord Buddha.

BUDDHISM IS THE RELIGION OF FRIENDSHIP

(from an article by the Most Venerable Dhīrañāṇamunī)

Evidence to this point is to be found in one of the Sūtras when the Buddha said that friendship was the whole basis of his teaching. Lord Buddha is the friend of all beings who may obtain deliverance through his friendship. He also said that all beings throughout the world should be regarded as friends and relatives of one another in birth, old age or decay, disease or illness, and death. And that they should be regarded as

friendly beings upon this single fundament. He always taught that buddhists should never be the enemies of the people who follow other religions or to regard them as heretics, and moreover, he said that whoever lives rightly, no matter what religion he professes, has hope of receiving happiness and joy both in present and future lives.

Conversely, anyone who professes to be a buddhist, but does not practise what he professes to be, will have very little hope of deliverance and happiness but instead will engender the opposite effect. Again, Lord Buddha advises that if all beings, both human and animal, shall regard themselves as being related in the circle of birth and death, this will make for greater friendship; because, when a man feels himself to be a relative to any living being, then he will not entertain any ideas of destroying that being, but will love and give help instead.

Whether or not buddhism would be able to lead the world to greater brotherhood, peace, happiness and deliverance and whether it would be able to prevent world war and be suitable as a religion for all people of the world, this I leave to be dependent upon your own consideration.

In conclusion, I beg to give my blessing. May you all obtain happiness, peace, success and deliverance.

- - - - -

Brief Way to Practice Vipassana Meditation

- | | | |
|---------------------------|----|-------------------------------|
| Satipatthan | 4. | Stiff, tense, movement, |
| Rules Of Thumb | | Displacement; |
| Helps calm the mind; | | Discern all of them. |
| Insight - mine! | 5. | Wandering thoughts, |
| | | On the spot, |
| 1. Back Straight, seated; | | Miss not, note them all. |
| Cross-legged; | 6. | Good, bad, neutral, |
| Centered on belly. | | Feeling; world |
| 2. Normal breathing, | | Bungle not! Note! Note! |
| 'Rising, falling | 7. | See, hear, senses; |
| Fixing on the mind. | | Consciousness: |
| 3. Pure dwells the mind, | | Careless - don't. Note! Note! |
| Guiltless kind; | | |
| Great, fine! Virtue true | | |



The monks in Buddhavihara.

Some poetry:

The thoughts that visit me
I tell them kindly to go,
not to disturb me.
Then some start to complain:
"Look, where is your hospitality?
You cannot go on to be impolite like that.
And imagine, what would you be one day
without a thought?"
I made a mental note of that one
and decided to show it some compassion.

Thoughts complaint:

"Why are you always arguing with us?
You never stop. Sometimes you claim that we are vague
or inconsistent, simply not good enough or confused.
What do you expect us to be? Nice and well-organized?
Sometimes you fall in love with a really wild one,
but only for a while.
And for another thing, you know,
You don't recognize a good one if you have it."

I really don't care for the end of the road,
if there is one, like they say.
I am in no hurry.
I just mind my travelling.

In a way I am already quite detached from the way.

(87.1)



The Venerable Phra Khru Kraisaravilasa (Mettaviharee) during his visit to the East early this year, with from left to right: Dingeman Boot, the Most Venerable himself, Ven. Jhananando (Phra Frits), Ven Kirano and Johan Tinge.

Part 2. Checking your practice.

To obtain the defilements of vipassanā meditation the meditator must have gone through the primary practice of vipassanā meditation in connection with the first, second and third ñāṇa or knowledge. Accordingly the defilements of vipassanā meditation should be considered as extraordinary mental states or mental qualities.

A Short explanation:

- 1) Light - Brightness within the mind caused by strong concentration, sometimes appearing to you like a flash of light.
- 2) Knowledge - Sharp, direct understanding of your personality; clarity about your past, present and future.
- 3) Ecstasy - Rapture; state of intense joy; you feel very great and powerful.
- 4) Tranquility - State of being extremely calm; this state is caused by the purification of your discipline and consequently the purification of your mind.
- 5) Happiness - Gladness caused by the closing of the senses; there is no interruption by any thought or feeling, especially no interruption by painful, uncomfortable feeling.
- 6) Confidence - Trust; you have a lot of confidence in the practice, in yourself, in vipassanā, in the teachings and the teacher, in brief, in everything that concerns your meditation practice.
- 7) Energy - You are able to carry on meditating for hours and hours, day and night, without getting bored, without getting tired of it. There is no frustration, no irritation, there is just an extraordinary amount of energy.
- 8) Mindfulness - Unusual ability to make mental notes on

what is happening from moment to moment.

9) Equanimity - State of mental serenity; there is no interruption by any mind-object, you hardly recognize any hindrances like desire, anger, hatred, aversion, drowsiness, worry, restlessness and doubt. Your mind is calm and stable.

10) Delight - Selfish pleasure or satisfaction; wrong mental attitude towards the states previously mentioned; you see these states as part of yourself, you claim them as your property.

At first glance this list is quite astonishing. It appears to be wrong. How can it be possible that for instance happiness, energy and mindfulness are negative? On the contrary, many meditators may be inclined to think, the qualities mentioned here are very positive. Meditators thinking in such a manner are quite right. The qualities mentioned here are not bad at all. All of them are very positive, all of them except the last one: delight. Delight is corrupt.

Not only delight itself is corrupt, but above all, it is a direct cause of corruption for the other mental states.

As soon as you take delight in your mindfulness, your knowledge or your happiness, etc., these positive states of mind are being spoiled, they all become mental defilements for vipassanā meditation.

Why?

Because delight or satisfaction cannot be possible without an "I". At the moment you take delight in something you are experiencing, the moment you are satisfied about it, the idea of Self creeps into the mind. In fact at that moment Self is firmly established in the mind. The establishment of Self is, as we have read in the foregoing (part 1), always opposite to the

way that is in accordance with vipassanā meditation.

On the contrary, the way that is in accordance with vipassanā meditation is the removal of the belief in Self until all traces of it have vanished.

This demonstrates how positive mental states spoiled by delight turn into defilements of vipassanā. E.g. knowledge itself is not corrupt, a wrong mental attitude towards it causes its corruption. Once you stop producing a selfish response (delight, satisfaction, pride) to these positive mental states they will remain pure and positive. They do not endanger your practising at all. In fact all these states, from number one up to and including number nine should come into the meditator's mind. Their appearance is within the process of vipassanā meditation.

When a meditator is able to be aware of them with pure mindfulness, seeing their arising and passing away, leaving them the way they are, without clinging to them, then this is very good (no conditioning).

This meditator certainly will make quick progress in the way of vipassanā.

When a meditator is not able to be aware with pure mindfulness it is impossible to make further progress. This kind of meditator is like an addict. He is so attached to one of these agreeable mental states, he will always long for one of them. Wittingly or unwittingly he is demanding a lot of result from his meditation practice. He longs to experience the same kind of agreeable mental state again and again. The first time you are being confronted by such an agreeable mental state, this is very likely to happen to you. Such an experience is really overwhelming.

Those who unwisely keep on practising this way without pure mindfulness, they will create a lot of karma, they are trying to condition reality (the way they want it to be), they develop

their egos instead of dissolving them, they are not free at all; meditation is reduced to a mere pursuit of gain.

One practical example may clarify this.

Hopefully it will provide a better understanding of the right or wrong mental attitude towards the defilements of vipassanā.

Imagine yourself meditating.

You are trying very hard to keep up your mindfulness. It is quite a job to do so. Many times you experience a lack of mindfulness or you experience that your mindfulness is lacking power. Your mind either slips away or it does not enable you to recognize an object on time. You make a mental note either too late or too early.

But after practising for some time without interruption you experience that you have less problems to keep up your mindfulness. Mindfulness has become a more natural state of mind. When the mind has slipped away, mindfulness can immediately be renewed, it can immediately regenerate itself.

During walking meditation you can easily recognize every slip of mind without mindfulness slipping away. The same during sitting meditation. For example: you can recognize the effects of inhaling and exhaling, which is the rising and falling of your abdomen, exactly on time. You are able to note "rising" or "falling" exactly the moment it really takes place; neither before its arising nor after its passing away. This means that your mindfulness is (in the process of) establishing itself on all four foundations of mindfulness (body, feeling, mind or thought and mind-object).

Well then, as soon as you become aware of this extraordinary mindfulness you care to observe it, because you can easily get hallucinations harmful to yourself, or get perverted (i.e. turned away from the

proper way of vipassanā meditation) thoughts.

For example:

"This is unusual for me."

"This is more than what I can expect from myself."

"How marvellous that my mind can be so clear."

"My understanding of vipassanā must be very good."

"I should always have this extraordinary mindfulness."

Every time such a thought arises, Self is there again. Both feelings of inferiority, embarrassment, and feelings of pride are corrupt. You are believing something, you are forming an opinion about something. You are not only judging an achievement, but you are also judging yourself in relation to this achievement. As a matter of fact you are creating and keeping up Self every time when such a thought arises. All this hinders the progress of vipassanā meditation. All beliefs and opinions (Self) are opposed to the way of vipassanā. Mindfulness is always good, but if perverted (harmful) thoughts are not stopped at once, mindfulness will become defiled. As soon as such thoughts arise you have to stop them by making a mental note. Then mindfulness will remain pure and undefiled.

So, in practising vipassanā meditation you have no pause to judge, no space to form an opinion, no occasion to be proud, no time for this at all. Many more examples can be given. Similar things can be said about the defilements.

For instance: tranquility may lead to complacency or self-satisfaction, confidence may turn into over-confidence or fanaticism. Elaborating on examples of all the defilements of vipassanā meditation would make this article too extensive.

To conclude one may say that encountering the vipassanā defilements means that you make some progress in your practice of vipassanā meditation. So,

when you do not put any self in connection with your personal ego, all this experience of the vipassanā defilements will remain positive; all you have to do is check them and keep them in the proper way.

ACTIVITIES IN BUDDHAVIHARA IN THE PAST YEAR

In the past year there were many activities in Buddhavihara. Many people from different backgrounds came for spiritual practice to the 'Abode of the Enlightened One'. While some came to perform pujas others came to practise vipassanā meditation or to attend a course such as the Thai-course. Most of the visitors were of course Dutch but there were also many from other nationalities, such as European, Thai, Chinese and American.

The more important pujas or buddhist ceremonies were usually visited by a few hundred people. Of these Vesak is considered the most important and the number of people celebrating it is likewise the largest. In fact on such occasions the premises are a bit too small. The meditation activities such as the monday-evenings and the weekends were usually attended to by 10 to 20 people, a not too big and quite loyal group.

The Thai-courses given in Buddhavihara were very popular; at this moment there are three groups of students of the Thai language, on Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday. After the summer-break the lessons will continue, though in a slightly different way. The course in buddhist psychology (Abhidhamma), meant for people who want to know more about the theory of meditation, will start again after the summer-break.

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Meditation - activities

Amsterdam

maandag 18.00 - 20.00 uur
adres: Buddhavihara,
St.Pieterspoortsteeg 29
Weekends: het eerstvolgende
meditatie-weekend in Buddha-
vihara zal in augustus plaats-
vinden.
info: 020-264984

Groningen

maandagavond 20.00 - 22.00 uur
adres: bij Paul en Sietske
Boersma, Korreweg 226A.
tel. 050-716083.
Weekends: 4/5/6 juni, met de
Eerw. Mettaviharee Mahathera.
Ook 8/9/10 juli, eventueel met
de Eerwaarde.
Plaats: Parallelweg 38/39.
info: Hein en Sandra
050-417184

Leiden

dinsdag 19.15 - 21.15 uur
adres: Faljerilstraat 8
info: Nel 071-154862
Han 01719-17424
N.B. Iedere 1^e dinsdag van de
maand is de Eerw. Mettaviharee
Mahathera aanwezig.

Utrecht

donderdag 20.00 - 22.00 uur
adres: Sterrenbosch 9bis
info: Henk 030-520023
Aad 030-888655

Tilburg

donderdag 20.00 - 22.30 uur
adres: meditatiecentrum Hoef-
straat 217.
dinsdag 20.00 - 22.30 uur
adres: studentenkerk Maranatha
Weekends: regelmatig in het
meditatiecentrum Hoefstraat 217.
kosten: een meditatieweekend
kost fl 60,-, met 2 warme en
broodmaaltijden fl 75,-.
Je kunt overnachten als je wilt.
Info: 013-366570

Brussel

For information please contact:
Alain Theate,
Rue Coloniale 52
Watermael - Boisfort
Brussel, Belgie.
tel. 2.660.41.23.

Retreats

A FOUR-WEEKS RETREAT

We are considering organizing a
Vipassanā meditation retreat
under the guidance of the Vén.
Mettaviharee Mahathera from
december 27th 1988 until
january 22nd 1989.

If there are enough people
interested to join this retreat
we can organize it in the by
now well-known center in
Ossendrecht. We need however
at least 10 people for the full
duration of the retreat.

So please contact us before the
1st of july, i.e. Buddhavihara or
Aad Verboom.

Location: Ossendrecht (in the
South-west of the Netherlands).
Costs: approximately hfl 40,-
per day.
For more information please
contact Buddhavihara.
